OJCS 1797-75
18 JUL 1975

STATSPEC

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, [   ] Study Group,
DD/I Management Staff

SUBJECT : Comments on the Technical Feasibility
of the [   ] Proposal   STATINTL

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1. As requested, here are my comments concerning the [   ] proposal. Three specific questions were asked: Could it be done? What would it cost? Should it be done? We will attempt to answer the first two questions and give a recommendation affecting the third question. In summary, the automation concepts put forth by [   ] are technically feas-STATINTL ible; for a relatively small software investment the [   ] RAPID system could be modified to support some of these concepts STATSPEC (excepted are content dissemination and online delivery of traffic to analysts); finally, we can take no stand on whether it should be done.

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2. From a data processing viewpoint the [   ] proposal envisions the following concepts:

a. Disseminating raw [   ] field traffic on the STATSPEC basis of area designators and/or subject codes applied in the field, or by content analysis, or by a combination of these.

b. Delivering the disseminated product to analysts by either direct teletype printout or computer generated hard copy.

c. Selecting traffic which has been pre-slugged
STATSPEC for the [   ] and automatically placing these items on [   ]

STATSPEC d. Sorting raw [   ] field traffic into geographic area categories or "books" on the basis of field-supplied codes, storing these books on tape, printing the tapes on multilith mats, and microfilming the mats.

The answer to the first question, "Can these things be done?" is an unqualified yes. In fact, we are doing some of them already. To say that a concept is technically feasible, how-ever, does not imply that the product produced from such a

process is an acceptable one. We can make no such judgement
in this case but only comment on the data processing aspects
of the proposal.

3.   The second question, "How much would it cost?"
could have several answers depending on where and how it was
done. A number of alternatives are available: A system
could be built with these capabilities using OJCS computers;
Office of Communication's CDS system could potentially handle
the problem; SAFE could perform these functions; and finally,
the [   ] RAPID system could be modified to provide this sup-
port. We cannot provide any meaningful comments concerning
that part of the [   ] proposal which deals with online de-
livery of a disseminated product. To comment on this we would
have to know how many terminals would be involved and have a
better definition of what the analyst would be doing on the
terminal.

a.   Except for online support to the production
analyst and dissemination by content analysis, RAPID
could be modified at relatively little cost to support
the [   ] proposals. Software modifications would
be needed in the following areas:

1)   Change the [   ] support to
recognize a field-supplied indicator that would
designate an item as destined for the [   ] auto-
matically place the item on the outgoing [   ]
[   ] queue with no human intervention.

2)   Enhance the existing sorting capability
to include a field-supplied subject and/or area
code.

3)   After the traffic has been sorted into
categories it can be automatically formatted into
"books" and written to tape with little or no
human intervention. Formatting could be provided
so that the appearance of the published books
would be similar to that now published. Since
the number of books is arbitrary, as many books
or groupings could be established as are necessary.
(NOTE: The qualitative content of the books can-
not be controlled automatically. There would be
no selection criteria applied; no grouping of like
items together; later incoming corrections could
probably not be applied against original text with
any validity; cut-off points arising because of
P&PD imposed page limitations would be arbitrary).

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We feel that these changes would not require major software modifications to RAPID if performed by [_____] RAPID contractor.

To operate RAPID in this "editor-less" environment would require less hardware than [____] has under contract. Surplus hardware would total approximately $225,000 (for 24 terminals and supporting controllers and six printers), but since this money is already spent, it cannot be counted as a savings. Also worth noting is the possibility of relocating the 24 surplus editor terminals for DD/I production analyst use in Headquarters to directly view sorted traffic. A cost would have to be added for communications support from Key Building to Headquarters. Whether RAPID could support this function cannot be determined until a definition is put forward of exactly what these analysts would do.

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[____] would still require a staff of communicators, computer center operators, intercept operators and a staff of system programmers. If OC does not absorb [_____] world-wide communications network, communicators are required to manage the network and provide for the flow of Headquarters and field traffic that is administrative in nature. Computer center operators are needed to keep the system running, switch in back-up equipment when needed, schedule maintenance personnel, change tapes and perform other duties normal to the operation of a complex computer system. An intercept operator is required to take corrective action on field traffic which, for various reasons is unprocessable (garbles in transmission, incorrectly applied codes, etc.). System programmers are required to maintain the software and assist in problem diagnosis. All these functions, except the last, require 24-hour, 7-day-a week staffing. [____] currently has 17 slots allocated to these functions. Assuming OC does not take over the communications network, we see no basis for lessening the number of people required. If anything, the complement of personnel on hand may have to be increased since these people will have to assume some of the responsibilities now borne by editors.

It is important to stress again that this discussion applies only to the technical feasibility of performing certain data processing functions and in no way implies that the product produced by such a process would be acceptable to its consumers.

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b. We cannot at this time estimate the costs of STATINTL adding the requirements indicated by the [____]proposal to the SAFE system. This is because the SAFE requirements and system design process has not progressed far enough to be able to measure, in quantitative terms, the incremental cost of software or the cost of hardware resource consumption needed. It should be pointed out, however, that SAFE requirements at this time envision keeping 30 days of [____] field traffic available for text searching by analysts. STATSPEC Under discussion is a further requirement to disseminate this traffic into "mail files" by analyst or branch profile of interest. Should this become a requirement, we will then have to explore whether the dissemination function would be done in OC's CDS system or in the SAFE computer system. Should dissemination be done for this traffic, it would be a relatively small incremental software addition to sort the incoming material by field-supplied subject and/ or area codes into books. These books could then be formatted in a manner acceptable to P&PD for publishing. Again, however, the cost of providing this support in SAFE cannot be estimated at this time. Also the publishing process would be subject to the same caveats discussed in (a) above relative to the quality of the content of the books.

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c. The [____] proposals could be implemented in the OJCS center, but the costs for doing so will not be estimated at this time. What would be required is a combination of the CRS MAD software to do content dissemination, the provision of a special purpose data management system, terminal support software, terminal controller hardware and terminals for the online portion of the proposal, and special purpose software to sort the traffic into books and reformat it for publication purposes. To reliably estimate the cost of this support will require first a complete definition of the requirement beyond the conceptualizing in the [____] proposal and second, approximately one man-
STAT month for a study to estimate the costs to build and operate such a system. Given the existence of RAPID and the upcoming SAFE system as potential solutions, we feel that such an OJCS system would be ill-advised at this time. We will, however, provide such an estimate if required. There is no doubt, however, that it is technically feasible; whether it is cost-effective or not is another matter. It is most definitely not off-the-shelf as [____]suggests in STATINTL his proposal (at least not on the OJCS shelf).

4. We believe the third question "Should it be done?" is outside the purview of this Office. We are neither consumers
STATSPEC of the [____] product nor DD/I analysts and are, therefore, in no position to offer opinion on this subject.

5.   In light of the imminent arrival of the ☐RAPID STATSPEC
system, papersavings which P&PD has already realized, and the
upcoming SAFE system, we feel the DD/I should defer the study
of this proposal until the capabilities and the computer archi-
tecture of SAFE are known. It may well be that SAFE (or SAFE
and CDS) will encompass some of the proposed functions. When
these are known we can more meaningfully examine data process-
ing options and, as a result of this, the DD/I will then have
a better understanding of the costs.

/s/

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_____
OJCS Member
☐ Study Group

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CONCUR.

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18 JUL 1975

HARRY E. FITZWATER
Director of Joint Computer Support
Date

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